

J S C ★ S S H I N I N G S T A R

NBL's Hammack still making waves

By John Ira Petty

Sandra Hammack made quite a name for herself as a swimmer at Clear Creek High School, Texas Tech and Southern Methodist. Now, after getting her degree in anthropology and working on underwater projects for NOAA, the National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution, she's still making waves. She's been a diver at JSC's Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory for almost two years. That's an understatement. In addition to setting state records and being an All-American swimmer in high school, she was an All-American in water polo too. She also ran track. In college, two years at Texas Tech and then two years at SMU after Tech dropped its swimming program, she was on full scholarship and went to nationals all four years in the 50- and 100-meter freestyle. She was ranked as high as 5th nationally. Hammack was born in Florida, but grew up in the Clear Lake area. Her father, Jim Hammack, worked for NASA at Kennedy Space Center and Johnson Space Center. Building boats was one of his hobbies. "I had my first boat when I was five," Sandra Hammack said. "My dad built a little gaff-rigged boat for me, with red sails. We had a 500-foot pier on Galveston Bay and my father would tether my boat to the end of it with a long line when I sailed it." She studied anthropology, because she wanted to go into underwater archaeology. She also studied photography, with archaeological documentation in mind. After graduation from SMU in 1989, Hammack interned with National Park Service, mostly doing research. Subsequently she worked for a year with the Smithsonian Institution's Maritime History Program, doing underwater archaeology and scrimshaw research, and then worked for National Oceanographic

*"I am very much a water person."*  
—Sandra Hammack



Sandra Hammack

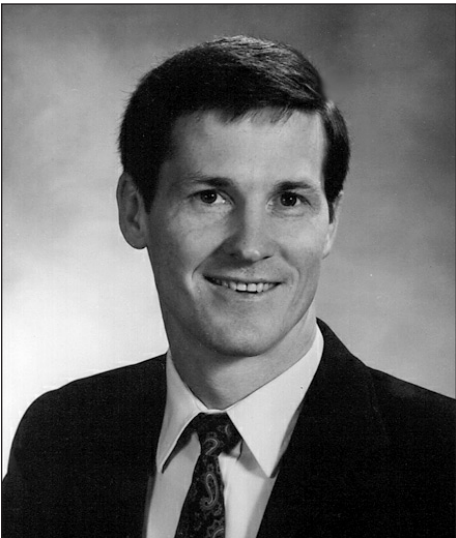
JSC Photo S99-04261 by Robert Markowitz and Chris Rupert

and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Sanctuary Program, mostly in the Florida Keys and off California. While she was with the Smithsonian, she coached the swimming team of Galludet University in Washington, D.C., a Division III school for the hearing impaired. The next job was in Florida, working for Sea World in Orlando, as an animal trainer. "I was there for a little over two years, and it was a blast." She worked with bottlenose dolphins, psudeorcas (false killer whales), beluga whales, polar bears, walruses, and harbor seals. "All of my jobs have been dream jobs for me," she said. "I've had great bosses, and in that type of work, the people are usually fun and interesting." She transferred to Sea World in San Antonio to be closer to home and her father, who was ill. She was hired by the NBL in July 1997, and then was hired to work at the NBL. As a safety diver, she ensures the safety of astronauts training at the NBL for space walks. As a utility diver she helps set up tests, place and move shuttle and space station mockups and move the astronauts from place to place during their training. Divers also make sure the astronauts and their equipment are as nearly weightless in the pool as possible. Hammack also does a lot of still and video photography of the training. Another of her roles involves conditioning training for new divers joining the NBL team. The family still has four boats. One is a black-hulled, double-ended sharpie almost 30 feet long beautifully built by her father, who died about two years ago. The other three are sailboats too, smaller than Vulture. Sandra Hammack dives even on days off. She and a friend have a small business (called Scrub A Tub), cleaning and doing minor repairs on boat hulls underwater. She finds the work at the NBL fascinating. Among the first crews she helped train was that of STS-88. She traveled at her own expense to Kennedy Space Center to watch its launch in December. "It was amazing, great," she said of the night launch. "Seeing the end product helps make it all worthwhile." ■

White Sands engineer receives Painter Memorial Award

Joel Stoltzfus, project manager/engineer, White Sands Test Facility, has received the 1998 Robert J. Painter Memorial Award from Committee G-4 on Compatibility and Sensitivity of Materials in Oxygen Enriched Atmospheres. The award honors Stoltzfus for his outstanding service in the area of fire hazards and oxygen systems. The award was originally established in 1956 as the American Society for Testing and Materials-Standards Engineering Society Award. In 1976, it took on its new name and the SES assumed its administration. A resident of Mesilla Park, N.M., Stoltzfus earned his B.S. degree in mechanical engineering in 1978 from

New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M. He began his professional career in 1978 as a mechanical engineer at White Sands. Stoltzfus' career has been oriented from the outset toward understanding and controlling fire hazards in oxygen systems. In 1989, he assumed his current position with NASA. During his career, Stoltzfus has concentrated on designing and developing several test methods for the ignition and combustion of metals and metal alloys in oxygen-enriched atmospheres. His recent efforts have focused on application of data to actual hardware; developing hazards analysis approaches for NASA; developing educational tools for training of engineers



and technicians in addition to designing and operating oxygen systems. Stoltzfus has been a member of ASTM since 1984. He is a member of Committee G-4 as well as five subcommittees of the parent committee. Outside of ASTM, Stoltzfus is a member of the National Fire Protection Association's Technical Committee 53 on Oxygen-Enriched Atmospheres. Committee G-4 is one of 130 ASTM technical standards-writing committees. Organized in 1898, ASTM is one of the largest voluntary standards development organizations in the world. ■ Joel Stoltzfus

STS-95 crew receives Morrow Public Outreach Award



THE DOUGLAS MORROW PUBLIC OUTREACH AWARD was presented to the STS-95 crew during ceremonies marking the 15th National Space Symposium April 5-8 in Colorado Springs. Each year the Morrow Award is presented to an individual, organization or team judged to have made the single most significant contribution to public understanding and awareness of U.S. space endeavors – civil, commercial or national security. The return to flight of space pioneer Sen. John Glenn, Spain's first astronaut Pedro Duque and a number of unique mission elements combined to focus the most significant worldwide media and public attention on space in recent history. The Morrow Award was accepted on behalf of the STS-95 crew by Pilot Steve Lindsey, Payload Specialist Chiaki Mukai and Mission Specialist Pedro Duque. ■